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October 1, 1947

MEMORANDUM TO GENERAL GRUENTHER:

I see two problems for National Security Council attention in connection with our policy in the Mediterranean.

1. The first is to determine the basic security requirements of this Government at this time, as they relate to the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas.

This would include answering such questions as the following:

Over what territories between here and the Mediterranean and the Middle East do we require direct control (bases)?

What territories must we require to be in allied (British) hands?

What territories can we permit to be in reasonably friendly or neutral (Spanish, non-communist French, etc.) hands?

What territories, if any, can we permit to fall into hands politically hostile to us but not connected to Russia?

What territories, if any, can we permit to fall into the hands of elements associated with Russia?

What lines of communication are important to us?

2. The second is the question of what action this Government should take in the event that the Russians should force our hand by extending their political control suddenly to further territory in this area. For this contingency we require agreed national plans which can be put into effect with the greatest promptitude. They should be directed only to such areas where such a contingency is a reasonably strong possibility. They should be worked out and

tentatively approved by the National Security Council, on the understanding that they would be subject to frequent review and possible revision in the light of changing circumstances and that they would not be put into effect by any government department until it had been determined by the Council that the contingency in question had arisen and that the conditions warranted implementation of the plan. The only two areas which in our opinion warrant that type of treatment at the moment are Italy and Greece; and papers covering these contingencies are being submitted to the Council. Possibly we should also give consideration to the action we should take in the event that violence should break out in the Arab countries on a scale which would effect our strategic position in the Middle East.

George F. Kennan
Director, Policy Planning Staff